

IN THE CLAIMS

This is a complete and current listing of the claims, marked with status identifiers in parentheses. The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A fuel-cell separator which is interposed between adjacent ones of a plurality of electrolyte assemblies, each constructed of an electrolyte layer containing an electrolyte medium and a catalytic electrode disposed on a surface in a thickness-wise direction of the electrolyte layer, the fuel-cell separator comprising:

a separating section for achieving separation between a fuel gas channel and an oxidizer gas channel; and

a sealing section disposed along an outer periphery of the separator, for preventing leakage of fuel gas and oxidizer gas, the separating section and the sealing section being integrally formed with each other,

wherein a region corresponding to the sealing section is provided with a sealing projection which is formed so as to extend in parallel with the surface of the electrolyte assembly on which the catalytic electrode is formed, a vertex of which is brought into pressure-contact with the electrolyte assembly under a resilient force, and

a sectional profile of the sealing projection perpendicular to a direction in which fuel gas and oxidizer gas flow is U-shaped or V-shaped, and

the sealing section is formed in a manner such that, when the fuel cell is in a yet-to-be assembled condition, the vertex of the sealing projection extends beyond a position of

contact with the electrolyte assembly in contrast to a case where the fuel cell is in an assembled condition.

3. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of claim ~~1 or~~ 2, wherein the separating section and the sealing section are formed integrally with each other by ~~means~~ way of plastic deformation processing.

4. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~ ~~claims 1 to 3~~ claim 2, wherein the fuel-cell separator is constituted by a metal sheet.

5. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~ ~~claims 1 to 4~~ claim 2, wherein the separating section has a plurality of parallelly arranged U-shaped channels positioned in parallel with the surface of the electrolyte assembly on which the catalytic electrode is formed.

6. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~ ~~claims 1 to 5~~ claim 2, wherein the separating section and the sealing section are formed by ~~means~~ way of press working.

7. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~ ~~claims 1 to 6~~ claim 2, wherein the sealing projection has, at least in its area to be contacted by the electrolyte layer, a high polymer elastic layer formed of an elastic body.

8. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 to 7, wherein the high polymer elastic layer has a width ranging from 1 to 10 mm and a thickness ranging from 1 to 100 μm .

9. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~
~~claims~~claim 21 to 8, wherein two or more pieces of the sealing
projections are provided, with their vertices abutted against
the electrolyte layer, and wherein, given that the location of
abutment between the vertex and the electrolyte layer is
imaginarily indicated by an abutment line, the two or more
abutment lines are arranged in parallel with each other.

10. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~
~~claims~~claim 21 to 9, further comprising an auxiliary
projection analogous to the sealing projection formed in the
region other than the sealing section and the separating
section,

wherein the auxiliary projection is disposed in such a
way as to make uniform the distribution of contact pressure
which occurs between the separator and the electrolyte
assembly at the time of assembly of the fuel cell including
the separator.

11. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of claim ~~1 or~~
2, wherein the separating section is formed of a metal sheet,
and the metal sheet has its surface coated with a rubber- or
synthetic resin-made coating layer.

12. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of claim 11,
wherein the coating layer exhibits electrical conductivity.

13. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of claim 11
~~or 12~~, wherein the coating layer is so formed as to cover the
surface of the metal sheet, with an adherent layer or a
surface-treated layer lying therebetween.

14. (Currently Amended) The fuel-cell separator of ~~any one of~~
~~claims~~claim 12 to 13, wherein in a region of the coating

layer which makes contact with the electrolyte assembly is formed a high conductive layer that is higher in electrical conductivity than the coating layer.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (New) The fuel-cell separator of claim 12, wherein the coating layer is so formed as to cover the surface of the metal sheet, with an adherent layer or a surface-treated layer lying therebetween.

20. (New) The fuel-cell separator of claim 11, wherein in a region of the coating layer which makes contact with the electrolyte assembly is formed a high conductive layer that is higher in electrical conductivity than the coating layer.

21. (New) The fuel-cell separator of claim 13, wherein in a region of the coating layer which makes contact with the electrolyte assembly is formed a high conductive layer that is higher in electrical conductivity than the coating layer.